

## Message Text

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42

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03

SS-20 USIA-15 SAM-01 IO-14 CU-04 SAJ-01 NIC-01 OMB-01

DRC-01 ACDA-19 COME-00 /159 W  
----- 093179

R 071602Z FEB 74

FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3162

INFO USLO PEKING

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 1819

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR CH IT

SUBJECT: CHINESE PROTEST TO ITALIANS ON ANTONIONI FILM

REF: PEKING 0200, PARIS 3334

SUMMARY: CHINESE HAVE SHARPLY PROTESTED ANTONIONI FILM TO GOI.  
ITALIANS HAVE RESPONDED FIRMLY THAT THEY DON NOT UNDERSTAND CHINESE  
PROTEST IN LIGHT OF FACT THAT FILM-MAKING AND RELEASE WAS FULLY  
APPROVED BY PRC. ITALIANS BELIEVE INCIDENT, AT LEAST AS IT AFFECTS  
PRC/GOI RELATIONS, IS CLOSED. END SUMMARY.

1. RESPONSIBLE ITALIAN FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIAL HAS INFORMED US  
THAT CHINESE CHARGE IN ROME READ FORMAL PROTEST NOTE TO DIRECTOR  
OF ITALIAN STATE TELEVISION NETWORK ON JANUARY 21, AND ITALIAN  
CHARGE IN PEKING WAS GIVEN IDENTICAL PROTEST ON SAME DAY BY PRC  
VICE FOREIGN MINISTER. OFFICIAL SAID THAT SUBSEQUENTLY CHINESE  
CHARGE HERE MADE IDENTICAL DEMARCHE TO CHIEF OF FOREIGN MINISTRY'S  
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PRESS OFFICE.

2. ACCORDING SOURCE, LANGUAGE OF CHINESE PROTEST WAS EXTREMELY HARSH AND ACCUSED ANTONIONI'S FILM OF "WANTON DISTORTION OF PRC'S IMAGE." PROTEST STATED THAT FILM "HAD ALREADY COMPROMISED RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES."

3. OFFICIAL SAID THAT ALTHOUGH ITALIANS DID NOT RPT NOT WISH TO POLEMICIZE ISSUE, MINISTRY HAD GIVEN FIRM REPLY TO CHINESE CHARGE, AND HAD INSTRUCTED ITALIAN EMBASSY IN PEKING TO DO THE SAME. OFFICIAL SAID CHINESE WERE TOLD THAT ITALIANS DID NOT RPT NOT UNDERSTAND REASONS FOR HARSH CHINESE PROTEST SINCE ANTONIONI HAD MADE FILM WITH FULL APPROVAL OF PRC AUTHORITIES, WHO, MOREOVER, HAD ACCOMPANIED HIM DURING FILMING. IN ADDITION, ITALIANS SAID THAT CHINESE HAD PREVIEWED FILM AND HAD APPROVED ITS RELEASE OVER A YEAR AGO. THEREFORE, IN ADDITION, ITALIANS FAILED TO UNDERSTAND TIMING OF PROTEST.

4. OFFICIAL SAID ITALIANS BELIEVED THAT THEIR EXCHANGE WITH CHINESE HAD CLOSED ISSUE, AT LEAST BETWEEN THE TWO GOVERNMENTS, SINCE SUBSEQUENT CHINESE PRESS CRITICISM HAS FOCUSED ON ANTONIONI PERSONALLY, WHILE ASSERTING THAT INCIDENT HAS NOT RPT NOT AFFECTED FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN CHINESE AND ITALIAN PEOPLES.

5. OFFICIAL SAID THAT NCNA REP HAS LEFT ROME, AND HE HAD BEEN OFFICIAL WHO HAD PREVIEWED FILM AND RECOMMENDED APPROVAL OF ITS RELEASE TO PEKING. ACCORDING SOURCE, ITALIANS INQUIRED OF CHINESE HER REASON FOR NCNA REP'S DEPARTURE, AND WERE TOLD THAT HE HAD RETURNED TO PRC "ON VACATION". IN RESPONSE FURTHER QUERY, CHINESE EMBASSY HAD SAID THAT IT WAS NOT SURE WHEN HE WOULD RETURN. (COMMENT: OFFICIAL INFORMED US THAT CHINESE AMBASSADOR SHEN PING HAD DEPARTED ROME FOR PEKING ON JAN. 20, AND, UPON INQUIRY, MINISTRY HAD BEEN TOLD BY PRC EMBASSY THAT SHEN PING HAD GONE ON VACATION AND THAT EMBASSY WAS NOT CERTAIN RE HIS DATE OF RETURN. ITALIANS ATTRIBUTE SHEN PING'S DEPARTURE TO PRESENT INTERNAL SITUATION IN PRC RATHER THAN TO FLAP OVER ANTONIONI FILM.)

6. ITALIAN MEDIA HAVE REPORTED ANTONIONI FILM INCIDENT FACTUALLY WITH\*ROUTINE COVERAGE.VOLPE

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** PUBLIC DEMONSTRATIONS, MOTION PICTURES, CULTURAL PRESENTATIONS  
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**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 07 FEB 1974  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** rowelle0  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
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**Executive Order:** GS  
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**Page Count:** 2  
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**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
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**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 19 APR 2002  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
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**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** CHINESE PROTEST TO ITALIANS ON ANTONIONI FILM  
**TAGS:** PFOR, CH, IT  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
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